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ABSTRACT

While playing simple games is creative active fun for kids, such fun can lead to learning of social science content and examination of values. The study of traditional Native American games can: (1) show young people that people of other times and other cultures were similar to them in many fundamental ways; (2) introduce children to some simple pleasures missing in our high tech world; (3) illustrate the strong connection between Indian spirituality and daily living; and (4) demonstrate how Indian games and toys prepared children for the ways of the adult world. This brief guide outlines the major concepts of adaptation and change, culture and diversity, and environment and resources, along with organizing generalizations, and provides a sample lesson plan. Other sections describe games of chance, games of dexterity or skill, games for amusement, toys, and contemporary activities such as powwow dancing and rodeo. This guide contains 15 references and resources. (SV)

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NATIVE AMERICAN GAMES FOR THE CLASSROOM

The men and boys lived for three sports: hunting, warfare, and ball games. These were the mighty three. All boys longed to do well in them, and praise and glory fell on success. ... Even though there were three distinct Cherokee dialects and seven clans, there was but one ball game, and it was played town against town. Occasionally the Cherokees played against Creeks or Chickasaws, or other Indian tribes, with horses or slaves or immense tracts of land wagered. A young man, such as Ridge, could not expect to play on a national team; he was an amateur, a student, who practiced the use of the stick.

Ehle, 1988, p. 23

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May, 1991



Proceeds from the sale of this resource book are donated to **The Circle of Learning**, a early childhood program sponsored by the Denver Indian Center.

The Circle of Learning program is based on the belief that:

The growth of children
and their parents
can be enhanced through
culturally appropriate education
and the building of a positive self-concept
and
fostering of positive parent and child partnerships
and positive communication promotes
strengthened families and healthy environments
for all children.



CHANGE/ADAPTATION

MAJOR CONCEPTS

Adaptation/Change

GENERALIZATIONS

The traditional games and toys of Native Americans changed when their cultures came in contact with other cultures.

Technology has created change in the games and toys of Native American adults and children.

Today, far more Indians listen to radio and television broadcasts of sporting events than to tribal tale-tellers recounting the exploits of a mythical player of games. ... But if the prayers and chants sung before an intertribal contest have been forgotten and ritual games are rarely played, the Divine Twins have no reason to complain. The legendary patrons of games must know that modern Indians are as actively engaged in baseball, basketball, football, golf, hockey, and tennis as their ancestors were with hoop and pole, snow snake, and lacrosse.

Lavine (1974, p. 90)

Students at the University of Georgia are reviving the ancient game of Toli, a once popular and sometimes violent American Indian sport similar to Lacrosse. The game is played on a field with long wooden sticks and a tiny leather ball.

Greg Keyes (Choctaw) introduced the sport to the campus, organizing 50 Toli players. Keyes, a graduate student in anthropology, grew up seeing how the game was played as a child on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Toli is a "first cousin" to Lacrosse, which was developed by tribes in the northern part of the US. As Lacrosse migrated southward, the Choctaw, Cherokees and other tribes made some refinements, and Toli evolved.

Each player in Toli wields a slender stick in each hand. The sticks are shaped like giant cotton swabs and are made from bent strips of hickory bound together with leather straps. The tip is a tiny basket. The sticks are not readily found in sporting goods stores. Keyes makes most of the equipment himself.

Twenty-five players on each team use the sticks to lift and throw the leather ball toward a 12 foot pole. A team scores when a player touches the pole with the ball, either by throwing it or holding it with the sticks. Although Choctaw tradition forbids women from playing, women are allowed on Keyes' team, called the "Flying Rat Toli Club."

(News From Indian Country, Early September 1990, p. 29)

CULTURE/DIVERSITY

MAJOR CONCEPTS

Culture/Diversity

GENERALIZATIONS

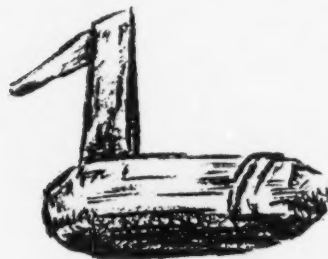
Traditional Native Americans developed a wide variety of games and toys. Most games are remarkably similar but some are unique to a particular tribe or region.

Many games and toys for Native American children helped develop skills needed for adult roles.

Traditional games and toys help Native Americans maintain the rituals and values of their cultures in the past as well as in the present.

Hiawatha thought the best thing the men did was play games. He especially liked to watch the young braves play baggataway, the game now called lacrosse. It was intended to help them prepare for war, but Hiawatha didn't dwell on that. He just enjoyed the excitement as the two teams raced back and forth swinging their netted sticks at the deerskin ball, trying to score a goal. When the game was over, everyone shouted and threw things onto the field. Although Hiawatha did not yet understand the game, he shouted along with the rest of them.

McClard & Ypsilantis, 1989, p. 7



ENVIRONMENT/RESOURCES

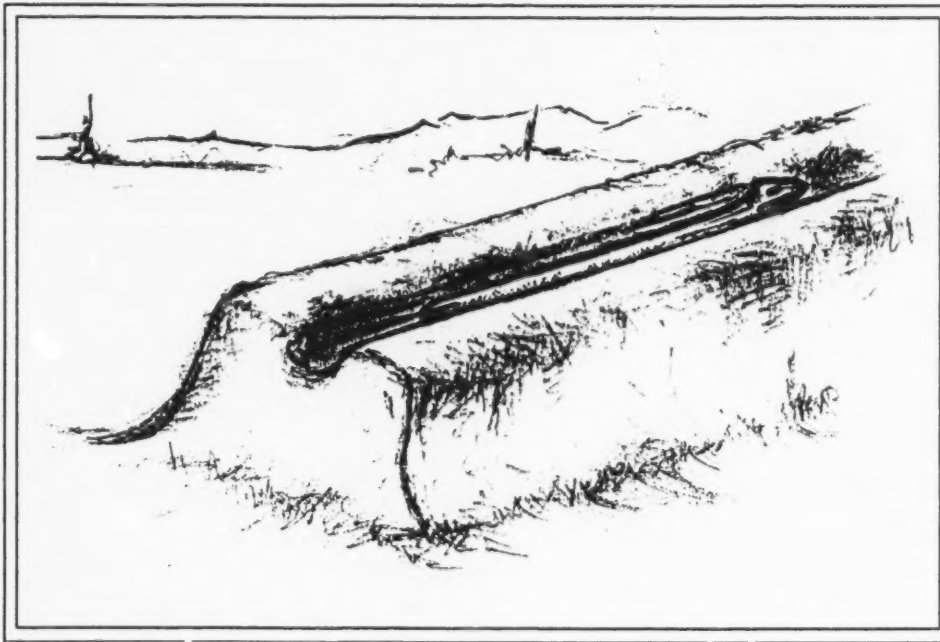
MAJOR CONCEPTS

Environment/Resources

GENERALIZATIONS

The physical environment and natural resources of a region affected how traditional Native American children and adults played and spent their leisure time.

- Games and toys of traditional Native American cultures reflect their geographic location and the particular time in which they lived.



In winter Hiawatha's older cousins played snow snake, a game in which they took turns sliding a long, polished hickory stick along an iced trough of snow, to see who could make it travel farthest. First his cousins dragged a log lengthwise through the snow to make a trench that was one foot deep and five hundred yards long. The trench was packed and smoothed until it was very slick. The sticks were sometimes nine feet long and looked like thin snakes as they shot along the icy trough.

Although the game looked easy, it took great skill and strength. After the young men were finished, Hiawatha and the other small boys tried the game, but they could never get their own sumac sticks to skim the snow as they were supposed to. Soon the boys were hurling the sticks like javelins at rabbits or at each other.

McClard & Ypsilantis, 1989, p. 7-9

Neither satellite discs, bowling alleys, Nintendo, Little League, The Bill Cosby Show, shopping malls, the Super Bowl, bicycles, books, Mutant Ninja Turtles, nor Disneyland were available to Indian people of long ago. Baby sitters, playgrounds, and fenced-in backyards existed, but certainly in different form. What did children do? How did they play? What was fun for them? Before Columbus sailed to North America, did Indian children ever feel bored? How did kids have fun long ago? How did adults relax and enjoy themselves?

Recently, an evening spent playing traditional hand games with contemporary American Indian people brought these questions to my mind, for the experience was rich beyond what I could have imagined. The evening had the warmth of a family gathering, the active involvement of the young and the old, vibrant songs and music, a penetrating feeling of history and tradition, the suspense of a television mystery, and more excitement than the Super Bowl. It was a simple evening with a pervasive spiritual sense of power, wholeness, and continuity. And it didn't cost a dime; it didn't require complicated equipment. A weekly event for the Lakota woman seated next to me, but a new experience for me!

Children of today are quite naturally interested in the activities of children of long ago. And the teaching of traditional Native American games leads students to the understanding of important major social science concepts and generalizations. However, there is additional value to the study of traditional Indian games and toys. First, it is useful for young people to realize that people of other times and other cultures were similar to them in many fundamental ways. People of long ago had responsibilities to their families and communities, they had friends, and they had fun. They were active, creative, and competitive in the games that they played and many of the things they did for fun are similar to the activities of many contemporary American children and adults. This understanding, threaded through time and culture, helps to nurture in children respect for other people who may, at first glance, seem more different than similar.

Second, as technology has brought sophistication to the pastimes of young people; it has also helped to create a bored, restless, and demanding whine in children who are often more dependent upon being entertained than on their own ingenuity. Our increasingly technological society has placed glitzy and seductive toys on television commercials and in check-out lanes. Advertising has created a need in children for the latest in toys, games, and equipment. Far too frequently, parents who work in demanding jobs and are unavailable to their children for long periods of time, succumb and meet the demands of their offspring. Yet, the whine of "I'm bored!" is common. It is ironic that we are compelled to provide more time for physical education activities in our schools to insure the physical well-being of inactive and passive children. While the study of traditional toys and games will never change the norms of today's childhood, children should study other times and consider other viable ways of living and playing.

Third, the study of traditional games and toys illustrates the strong connection between Indian spirituality and the daily lives of Native Americans, past and present, and can provide a deeper understanding of the critical connection between the views people hold about how the world works and how they live their lives. Children can explore these ideas when they examine such questions as, "Why do Navajo people only tell stories after the first frost appears in the autumn and stop telling them after the first lightening in the spring?"

And last, through games, children can sense how life has changed in other ways. For example, many Indian games and toys prepared children and youth for the ways of the adult world. Games for male children and adults were often to increase dexterity and stamina and acquire skills needed for hunting, fishing, and warfare. Females practiced child care and the preparation of food and clothing. How do children prepare for adult roles today? What skills are necessary for adults? Are these skills different for men and women? How do people prepare for competence in adult roles? These are logical questions and worth exploring.

Playing simple games is just plain creative, active fun for kids - but such fun can lead to significant learning of social science content and, perhaps more significantly, the examination of important values.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Grade Level: Intermediate

Basic Concepts: Natural materials, games, tools, and technology

Organizing Generalizations:

Traditional Indian people used the natural materials in their environment for their games. To make game equipment, they used the materials and tools that were available to them in their geographic area and in the time in which they lived.

Culture Area: General - throughout what is now the United States

Time Period: Before European Contact - before 1492

Background:

Balls were used in many adult and children's games of dexterity and skill throughout Indian cultures. There is historical evidence of ball courts in the United States, Mexico, and in South America. Although this lesson will focus on leather balls stuffed with grass, stones, or other environmental materials, balls of many kinds were used including: wood balls, stone balls, balls made of pitch and hair, braided leather balls, and rubber which was used for balls in South America before European contact. The balls that will be made by students in this lesson can be used throughout a study of Indian games or Indian culture. This lesson provides an opportunity to discuss technology, Indian ingenuity and resourcefulness, and the minimal effect that traditional games had upon the environment.

Objectives:

Knowledge (Content)

Students will:

1. Describe the natural materials used in making a ball similar to one that could have been used in games played by Native Americans before European contact.
2. Recognize that the natural resources which were available in each particular cultural area were used to make balls and other game equipment.
3. Discuss how technology or the available tools at a particular time in history determine how people fashioned their balls and other game equipment.

Skills

Students will:

1. Brainstorm at least five ways to make a ball using natural materials.
2. Make a stuffed ball out of leather (or substitute for leather) and grass, seeds, stones, or other natural materials.
3. Correctly follow instructions for making a ball, including making accurate measurements.
4. Compare the impact on the environment of low technology game equipment (a traditional Indian ball) versus high technology game equipment (plastic balls, foam balls, nylon stitching and stuffing etc.)
5. Hypothesize how games of today would be different if we used balls similar to the traditional balls.

Values (Organic)

Students will:

1. Recognize the creativity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness required of Native Americans of long ago.

Activities:

1. Begin this lesson by showing a picture of Indian adults or children playing a ball game. Ask students to describe the equipment and speculate what the ball is made of and how it was made. There are likely to be several possible answers, depending on the game. Make a large chart of student guesses or hypotheses.

2. On a map of the major cultural areas (Arctic, Sub-Arctic, Northeast, Southeast, Plains, Southwest, Far West, Northwest, and Mexico) locate the area in which the pictured game is taking place. It is worth taking time to delve rather deeply into the geographic characteristics of the particular cultural area including:
 - a. land forms and water bodies
 - b. latitude and longitude
 - c. average monthly rainfall, high and low temperatures, and length of growing season
 - d. natural resources of the region, including vegetation, animals and natural sources of food

After learning about or reviewing the natural and physical environment of the region, ask children if they would add anything to their original chart. Put any additions onto the chart and delete those previous hypotheses that no longer seem reasonable.

3. Form small groups of 3 - 4 students, then ask them to figure out a way to make a ball that is not made of stone, list the resources they would need, and estimate how much time it would take to make the ball. They should keep in mind that the ball needs to be fairly rugged. **There are no incorrect answers.**
4. The teacher should make and display a chart showing different types of balls (see Chart 1). Cullin's book, Games of the North American Indians is a thorough and accurate reference.
5. Children, individually or as partners, should then make a ball. Depending on the size, age, and nature of the group and the natural resources available, they could:
 - a. try to make their own designs
 - b. make a pouch ball
 - c. make a round ball (pattern attached)
 - d. carve a wooden ball
6. Graph the following information:
 - a. how long it took to make each kind of ball
 - b. would the ball be thrown, kicked, or rolled
 - c. advantages of the design and materials of each type of ball
 - d. disadvantages of the design and materials of each type of ball
 - e. culture areas which might have had similar types of balls
(some research may need to be done of the physical environment and natural resources of other cultural areas)
7. Discuss the impact on the environment of low-technology game equipment and modern day equipment.

Extensions:

1. Research the technology and materials used today in making footballs, bowling balls, racquet balls, golf balls, nerf balls, beach balls, tennis balls, or baseballs. Students may be interested in comparing the prices of the variety of sports balls that are currently used.
2. Investigate reports of the ancient ball courts in Mexico and in the Southwest.
3. Develop new rules for games of today assuming traditional balls were to be used.

Evaluation:

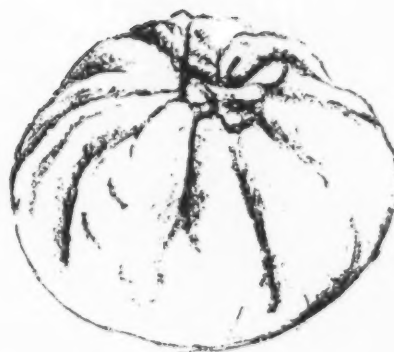
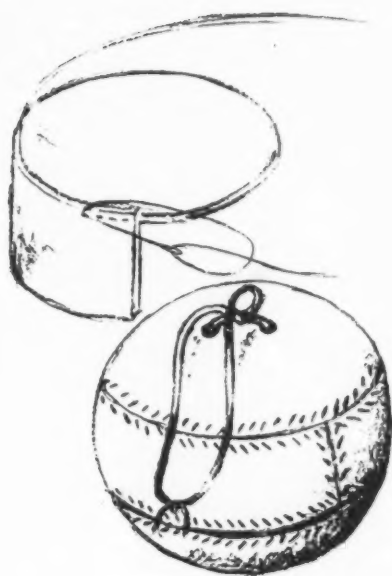
Students should be able to discuss how balls (and other game equipment) were made from the natural resources found in a particular region.

Materials and Resources:

Cullin, S. (1975). Games of the North American Indians. New York, NY: Dover.

Harvey, K. D., Harjo, L. D. & Jackson, J. K. (1990). Teaching about Native Americans. Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies.

Whitney, A. (1977). Sports & games the Indians gave us. New York, NY: David McKay.



TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN GAMES

Concepts and Generalizations

MAJOR CONCEPTS

GENERALIZATIONS

Environment/Resources

The physical environment and natural resources of a region affected how traditional Native American children and adults played and spent their leisure time.

Games and toys of traditional Native American cultures reflect their geographic location and the particular time in which they lived.

Culture/Diversity

Traditional Native Americans developed a wide variety of games and toys. Some games are remarkably similar but some are unique to a particular tribe or region.

Many games and toys for Native American children helped develop skills needed for adult roles.

Traditional games and toys help Native Americans maintain the rituals and values of their cultures in the past as well as in the present.

Adaptation/Change

The traditional games and toys of Native Americans changed when their cultures came in contact with other cultures.

Technology has created change in the games and toys of Native American adults and children.

GAMES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Native American games may be classified into five major categories:

- Games of chance (before European contact)
 - Dice games
 - Guessing games
- Games of dexterity or skill (before European contact)
 - Archery
 - Snow-snake
 - Hoop and pole
 - Ring and pin
 - Kick stick
 - Ball games
- Games for amusement (before European contact)
 - String games
 - Tops
 - Bull-roarer
 - Buzz
 - Poppun
- Games derived from Europeans (after contact)
 - Playing Cards
 - Board Games
 - Baseball
- Games, competitions, or sports that are contemporary
 - Powwow dancing
 - Rodeo
 - Basketball
 - Track

The games that are described in this book are traditional games, games that adults and children played before European contact and include: (1) games of chance, (2) games of dexterity or skill, and (3) games for amusement or fun. Only brief mention will be made of the contemporary games, competitions or sports, primarily because the games and pastimes of Indian people are now those of the dominant culture, with only some minor exceptions that are related to cultural traditions. Toys will be included also, because toys were used by children who were too young for strenuous or competitive games and were often used to teach children appropriate adult roles. Games learned from Europeans will be omitted. Games are defined as activities that use implements, excluding children's games such as swimming and tag which are common throughout time and in varying cultures.

I have tried to describe simple games that are reasonable to play without a trained physical education instructor and games that are short in duration, inexpensive, and adaptable to a variety of settings - including school classrooms and playgrounds in urban settings. I have also tried to avoid implements that could be potentially dangerous such as sharp darts or games that demand heavy physical contact.

Teacher should make an effort to learn about how Native people actually played the games; the historical and cultural aspects of these games as they were played in different tribes is fascinating and provides a multitude of learning opportunities for children. Teachers should also be aware of the spiritual significance of many of the games. The books that were used to compile these simple directions offer more detailed directions and valuable information that should not be overlooked.

GAMES OF CHANCE

Counters were used to keep score in many of the dice, stick, and other games of chance. Counters can be such things as corn, beans, colored sticks or toothpicks, or stones. Counters used for the following games played by young children can teach many important math lessons painlessly.

Dice Games

Dice games were common and many types of materials were used as dice. Some of the more common and easily accessible materials were stones, wood, reeds or cane, sticks, pottery disks, fruit pits, shells, seeds, and animal teeth and bones. The dice are easy and inexpensive to make and the rules for the games can be simple and easy for children to learn. They can also make up their own rules.

#1 Stick game (Blood, 1981, p. 6)

You will need:

3 popsicle sticks and crayons

- Make two sticks red on one side like this:

SNAKE



- Leave the other side plain
- Make one stick blue on one side like this:

MAN



- Leave the other side plain

How to play and score:

Hold all three sticks in both hands. Toss them in the air.

If all the plain sides fall face up, score 4 points.

If all the marked sides land face up, score 4 points.

Two Snakes and one plain up, score 6 points.

Two plain and one Snake up, score 6 points.

One plain, one Snake, and one Man up, score 0 points.

#2 Wooden dice game (Blood, 1981, p. 19)

You will need:

1 twelve inch dowel or broom stick

sandpaper

red paint or marker

- Ask an adult to cut the dowel into three equal parts with a saw. Sand one side of each piece flat. Paint an Indian design on one round side of one piece to make dice that look like this:



How to play:

Throw the dice on a flat surface. Three round sides up count 10. Three flat sides up count 5. Decorated stick round side up counts 15. Plain stick flat side up counts 15. Everything else counts 0.

3 Bowl game (Hofsinde, 1957, pp 15 - 19)

You will need:

a small wooden salad bowl or a small basket

6 peach or plum pits

paint (fingernail polish works well)



- Wash the pits and let them dry thoroughly. With the paint draw a broad line or spot on one side of each stone.

How to play:

Put the six pits into the bowl or basket. With the bowl in one hand, flip the pits up into the air, and catch them again in the bowl. Score by counting the number of pits that land with the marked side up.

Each one that lands with the marked side up counts one point. After scoring your turn, pass the bowl to your opponent. After she makes a toss, counts her score, and passes the bowl back to you. Each player keeps her own score with counters. The winner is the one having the most counters in front of her after twenty tosses. Two people or teams can play this game. If teams play, each player tosses ten times and the final team scores are tallied, and the team with the largest score wins.

Guessing Games

#1 Hand games (Blood, 1981, p. 11)

You will need:

2 small stones or peach pits

red paint or marker



How to play:

Sit in a circle on a blanket with some friends. Hold the stones in one hand. Pass one of the stones to the person at your right. Don't let anyone see which stone you pass. The person to your left has to guess which stone you passed. If this person guesses the correct stone, give her both stones. Then she has to pass the stones on to another person. Next, ask someone else to guess. You can play as long as you like, but the person who guesses the correct stone the most number of times is the winner.

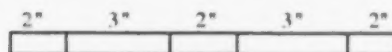
2 Stick guessing game (Hofsinde, 1957, p. 9)

You will need:

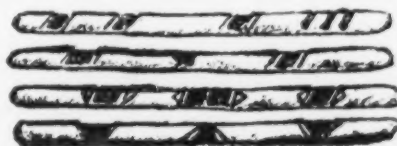
8 slender sticks about 12 inches long (dowels work best)

permanent marker

- Measure the sticks carefully



- On seven sticks, paint the two inch sections. On the eighth stick, leave the end two inch sections plain.



How to play:

Two teams with four to eight on each side can play this game. The teams are seated on the ground so that they face each other and a folded blanket is placed between them.

One team holds the sticks. Hiding them under the blanket, two teammates divide the eight sticks into two bundles of four each. These two players hold the two bundles so that the painted ends are covered by their hands. Then they hold out the bundles of sticks toward their opponents. The object of the game is for the other team to guess in which of the two bundles the odd stick is hidden. Because all the eight sticks have a center marking, it is no easy task.

If the rival team misses its guess, the first team gets one point. It shuffles the sticks again under the blanket, and the next two players grasp the bundles and hold them forward. If, on the other hand, the opponents guess right, then it is their turn to hold the sticks, and the first team must guess. Each team may keep its own score, or a scorekeeper may be appointed. The scorekeeper sits between the teams, at one end of the folded blanket.

Colored counters can be used for keeping score. One team is indicated by red, and the other by green counters. The score keeper holds 20 of each color. When a member of a team guesses correctly, the scorekeeper places a counter belonging to that team in front of him. The members of each team take turns guessing. The team whose 20 counters are first used up is the winning team (Hofsinde, 1957, pp. 9 - 14).

GAMES OF DEXTERITY OR SKILL

Archery

1 Arrow toss (Blood, 1981, p. 14)

You will need:

50 plastic straws

clay

red permanent marker

- Make "arrows" from the straws, by pushing clay into one end. Use the red marker to mark the end with the clay inside.

How to play:

You need five people. Each person should have ten arrows. On the ground, draw a circle that is 3 feet across. Stand two paces from the circle. The first player should toss his first arrow into the circle. The second player tries to toss his arrow so that it lands on the first player's arrow. If it does, he wins both arrows. If it doesn't, the next player tries to land his arrow on one of the arrows in the circle. If he does, he wins the arrows and the game begins again with that player tossing in the first arrow. The game continues until someone wins all the arrows.

Snow-snake

You will need:

Lots of snow!!

A long piece of wood - 1 1/4 inches square and 5 feet long for carving

Broomsticks or mop handles will also work

A sharp knife (for older students)

Sandpaper

Paint brush and varnish

- Snow snakes can be rounded and carved to resemble a snake and decorated with Indian designs. This would be a significant craft project for older students. However, for younger students snow snakes can also be made from simple broomsticks or mop handles. Varnish is used to make the snow snake waterproof and warp-proof.

How to play:

Snow snake is played in the northern part of the country where there is abundant snow. First a long, narrow bank of snow is built in a straight line. It will be about two feet high and three feet, and 1000 to 2000 feet long (shorter for younger students). Flatten the top of the snowbank and then make a smooth shallow trench in the flattened top. Indian boys often used a sturdy limb of a tree with two branches protruding from the narrow end to drag along the top center of the bank. Standing at one end of the prepared snowbank, each player takes turns sending his snake skimming along the groove on top. The snow snake can be thrown underhand or overhand. Each player marks the place where his snake stopped. The winner is the player who can throw the snow snake the farthest.

Indians have been known to hurl their snow snakes at a speed of more than one hundred and twenty miles per hour, and to cover a distance of more than one mile. This interesting game was the national game of the Iroquois tribes (Hofsinde, 1957, p. 48).

Hoop and pole (Levine, (1974) pp.69 - 75)

"Like certain games of snow snake, hoop and pole provided training in marksmanship. It also developed muscles and tested players' stamina. Meanwhile, no Indian game drew more heavily on the redman's religious beliefs. ... Irrespective of their tribes, all Indians believed that the netted hoop had a divine origin. Some traced it back to the webbed shields of the war gods. Others said it stemmed from the sacred web woven by Spider Woman and was a symbol of her protection. This is the reason Chippewa parents placed small netted shields on their babies' cradles, the Navajo wore circlets of woven grass, and many Indians placed tiny netted shields in their hair as a combination ornament and good-luck charm. Incidentally, netted shields also were important accessories in the Sun and Ghost Dances. Today, netted shields hang from many Hopi kachina masks".

You will need:

- a webbed hoop (hoops can vary in size from 2" to 2' or more - the webbing can be made of rawhide or string or yarn)
- a pole, spear, or dart

Because of the importance of the webbing, and the fact that tribes webbed hoops differently, students would need to do research on games and specific tribes before trying to web a hoop. Again, it is important to note how available resources affected how hoops were made. The making of webbed hoops could be an intriguing art project. Younger children could use a simple hoop - perhaps a larger hoop. Again, safety is also an important issue.

How to play:

There is no one standard version of the hoop and pole game. Most tribes played hoop and pole although they played it in different ways and with different rules. Their beliefs regarding the divine origin of the game also varied. The game was played by throwing arrows, darts, or spears at a rolling netted hoop. The hoops were also netted in a variety of ways. Simply spearing the hoop did not count. It had to hit so that the pole either fell on top of, or below, certain points of the hoop's interior webbing. Students could make up their own rules for scoring.

Ring and pin

"Many materials were made into rings, including deer bones (Sioux), fish vertebrae (Hupa), dried gourd (Pima), and acorn caps (Mission). The pin was a pointed bone, stick, or needle. The rings were suspended on a long thong tied on one end to the pin and on the other to a piece of rawhide to prevent the rings from slipping off. In the Cree version of the game, the last ring of bone (nearest the rawhide) was painted blue-green and called the "last-born child." Catching this one meant the player instantly won the game (Bernstein & Blair, 1982, p. 73)."

You will need:

Leather thong, about 15" long

Tapered (but not sharp) stick, about 15" long

3 - 6 bones with holes in the centers about 1/2" wide (you can use curtain rings, large washers, cardboard, or dried apple or pumpkin rings)

Sandpaper

Rawhide or stiff leather scrap, wider than the bone or other rings

Large hole punch

Blue-green poster paint and brush

- Tie the thongs to the middle of the stick.
- Use sandpaper to smooth any rough spots on the bones.
- Slip the bones onto the thong.
- Punch one large hole in the center of the rawhide and some random smaller holes (but large enough for the stick to enter). At one end, punch a hole 1/2" from the edge in which to insert the thong.
- Knot the thong securely onto the rawhide.
- Paint the bone closest to the rawhide blue-green.

How to play:

Hold the stick firmly in one hand. Swing that arm up and forward to toss the rings. As the rings fall, try to spear one or more of them with the point of the stick, or try to spear a hole in the rawhide.

To keep score, count the small holes in the rawhide as 2 points. The large hole counts 10 points. The bone in front of the blue-green ring counts 15 points, and each bone closer to the stick goes up in value by 5 points. The blue-green bone, if caught, is an instant win. A player continues to toss until he or she misses the rings and leather target altogether. Then the next player takes a turn. At first, the game may seem difficult, but after a little practice, you will be ready for a challenging game.

Kick Stick

"The Zuni though the stick rolling ahead of them made them run faster. So, when they wanted to hurry home from the corn fields, they would break off a piece of branch and kick it in front of them to speed their return (Bernstein & Blair, 1982, p. 60).

You will need:

Broomsticks, long dowels, or long branches (1" across and 4" long)

String

Red poster paint and brushes

How to play:

Choose teams with 3 - 6 members on each team. Each team will have a 4" stick.

One team will paint a red strip around the middle and red stripes around each end of their stick. The other team will paint a red strip around the middle of their stick. Other designs can also be used. Team members might want to choose a group symbol (arrow, wings, thunderbolt, roadrunner, hummingbird etc.) to paint on T-Shirts or as body paint.

Set up a long course by marking the ends with string.

A "starter" who is not running will give the signal to begin the race.

The leaders lift their kick sticks on their toes, tossing the sticks up and ahead of them. The other team members race after the sticks, kicking them up to teammates who are running ahead. If a runner misses, another teammate comes up behind and takes over the pass. The first team to kick its stick the length of the course and back again wins. Only feet or toes can be used to move the stick forward.

Ball games

#1 Shinny (Blood, 1981, p. 24)

You will need:

- A slim, flexible stick for each player
- 4 sheets of newspaper
- 4 strong sticks - 15" long

- Masking tape
- Paint
- String

- Bend each slim stick so that it has a hook at the end.
- If you cannot find a stick that bends, tape two sticks together
- Tie the stick so it will stay bent.
- Roll the newspaper into a ball and cover it with tape.
- Paint a design around the ball.

How to play and score:

Shinny is like hockey, except that there is no net.

Make a goal by putting two of the strong sticks into the ground 3 feet apart at each end of a large playing field.

To begin, set the ball in the middle of the field. Each team stands by the goal.

On signal, both teams run to the ball.

The idea is to get the ball through the other team's goal markers.

Do not touch the ball with your hands or feet, only with the sticks.

You can throw the ball with your shinny stick, but you cannot hit other players with your stick.

One point is scored for each goal.

As many can play as want to, but there must be the same number on each side.



GAMES FOR AMUSEMENT OR FUN

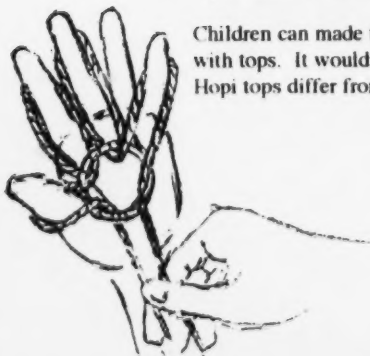
String games

Lucky is the person who knows string games - all that is needed is a piece of string in your pocket. James Murphy, a teacher in New York, has been using string games to teach both basic and sophisticated math concepts to "at risk" high school students. String games can be found in various cultures throughout the world and are a way to teach the stories and pastimes of other cultures and people. By far the best books on string games are the books written by Camille Gryski (see resource section). Her illustrations and directions are clear and easy to follow. However, be prepared to practice - cat's cradle is just the beginning! In a typical classroom, some children will catch on quickly and be able to help others learn.

Tops

"The favorite kind of top for most American Indian boys was the whip top. This was generally a cylindrical piece of wood, roughly peg-shaped and pointed at one end. The top was spun between the fingers to get it started and then was kept in motion by striking it with a whip. These whips usually had from two to four, 18 to 24 inch strands of buckskin tied to the end of a wooden handle a foot or two long. An expert could keep one of these whip tops spinning almost indefinitely and could actually make it hum (Baldwin, 1969, pp. 29 - 30)".

Children can make tops of natural materials, and like Indian children, devise a variety of games, contests, or races with tops. It would be interesting to devise tops that could have been used in different environments. How would Hopi tops differ from tops made by Arctic people?



Bull-roarer

The bull roarer or moaning stick is an Indian noisemaker and was often used in ceremonies to bring forth rain or to drive away spirits (Hofsinde, 1957, pp. 59 - 65). It is considered to be a sacred implement, closely allied to lightning, thunder, and rain. A bull-roarer is a thin, flat, rectangular slat of wood with a long cord tied to one end. When the piece of wood is whirled rapidly around the head at the end of the cord, it gives a distinctive roaring or whizzing sound.

What you need:

A piece of wood, 6" long, 2" wide, 1/4" thick.

Paint to decorate the stick

Thick strong string or twine, about 20" long.

- Drill a hole in the center of the wood about one inch from the top (one of the 2" sides).
You can use a large nail to do this - be careful not to split the wood.
- When the hole is made, thread one end of the heavy twine through the hole.
- Tie the twine to the wood with several very tight knots.

How to play:

Wrap some of the twine around one hand. Lift that arm over your head and swing the groaning stick around. It should begin to hum and buzz after a few turns. Try adjusting the length of the string by wrapping it more or less around your hand. Stop slowly by lowering your arm, keeping it stretched in front of you.

REMEMBER: A groaning stick can be dangerous if it is not used properly. Always use it outside and a good distance away from people - stay out of the way of someone else who is playing with a groaning stick.

Buzzer

Native American children played with a simple noisemaker that hummed and buzzed on a piece of twisted string. They strung a small piece of bone, ivory, wood, dried gourd shell, or clay disk on a sinew cord. The cord was made into a loop and twisted to "wind up" the toy. Children pulled the string tight and then let it loosen to make the disk spin. The spinning disk and vibrating string made a humming or buzzing sound. This toy did not have any ceremonial use or meaning - it was just for fun (Bernstein & Blair, 1982, p. 56).

What you need:

Self hardening clay or a large coat button

A small jar or glass

Small stick or pencil

Poster paints and brushes

2 small pegs or bones (Split a wishbone into two pieces)

About 20" of leather thong or waxed string or cord

- Make a 1-4" thick pancake with the clay.
- Use the rim of the jar or glass to cut out a small disk, about 2" across. A large coat button can also be used.
- Poke two holes in the center of the disk with a small stick or a pencil point.
- Use the same tool to scrape a design on the clay. Allow the clay to dry for a day or two.
- Paint the disk and the paint or bones.
- Thread the thong or cord through both holes in the disk or button.
- Tie the ends of the thong together.
- Knot the end loops of the cord around each of the pegs or bones to make handles.

How to play:

Wind the handles in opposite directions until the cord is twisted. To make the toy hum and buzz, pull the cords tight and then let them loosen. The disk in the middle will spin and bob up and down and sing.

Popgun

A popgun was a foot-long tube of wood that had another piece of wood used as a piston for shooting wads of bark or other fibers or small stones (Baldwin, 1969, p. 36). Popguns are toys that have been used by many children throughout the ages. Try making a popgun out of natural materials.

REMEMBER: Popguns can be dangerous if they are pointed at people or animals. Be sure to make and follow sensible rules for the safety of other people.

CONTEMPORARY GAMES

The fifth category of Native American games includes contemporary games or sports that are unique to Indian culture and people and those that have been especially embraced by Indian youth because of their geographic location and because of their availability to small populations in rural or poor schools and communities.

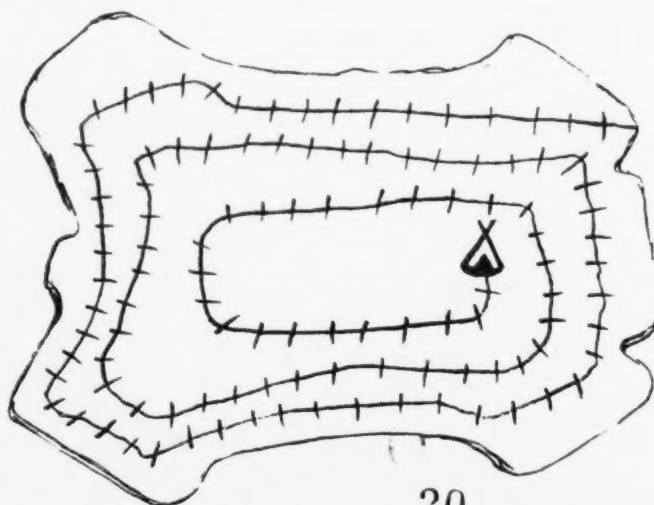
Powwow dancing could be included as a competitive sport which is unique to Indian culture; it requires practice, great skill, elaborate costumes, and is demonstrated in highly competitive events at powwows throughout the country. The powwow is a major social, cultural, political event throughout Indian America. Schools that are located near reservations or in metropolitan areas should arrange for children to attend a powwow. The pageantry, music, dancing, arts, food, and general atmosphere will certainly teach children that Indian people are not just folks in stories, textbooks, and museums. But they are alive, well, and as the bumper sticker proclaims, "Indian and Proud".

Rodeo is a major sport in southwestern regions and is part of the contemporary western culture, and includes Native American and Anglo-American spectators and participants. Basketball is gaining as a sport in Indian communities; it is well-suited to small schools and is inexpensive compared to other sports requiring special equipment or facilities. Track events are also popular, partly because there is a cultural and spiritual tradition of track-like events such as running, partly because track events such as running and jumping are cross-cultural in the sense that they are also valued in the dominant culture, and partly because of the universal availability of the sport.

TOYS

Brief mention should be made of toys including dolls, models of animals, commonly used utensils and equipment such as the travois, pet animals, and household equipment including pottery and baskets. Small children in most cultures engage in imitative behaviors that are related to what they see their mothers, fathers, and families doing daily. Undoubtedly, they also engaged in imitating ceremonials and other sacred rites.

Children of today might enjoy creating toys out of natural materials that Native children might have made to play with before European contact. This type of activity would create a need for research and for creativity and ingenuity. They might also make a bulletin board or a data retrieval charts that compares toys of long ago and modern toys.



TOYS

TEEN

AND

NOW

Dolls	Regional dolls out of natural fibers and materials, cradle boards	Barbie dolls, baby dolls, G.I. Joe, toy buggies and doll strollers
Clothing for dolls or "pretend"	Regional costumes out of natural fibers and materials	Contemporary clothing - bathing suits, jeans etc.
Pets	Regional pets - birds, dogs, orphaned animals - clay or fiber animal toys	Common pets (dogs, cats, fish, birds, gerbils etc.) or stuffed animals
Cooking utensils	Pottery, bone utensils, baskets, grinding stones	Metal and plastic pots, pottery and china play dishes
Housekeeping tools	Brooms, animal skin bedding, outdoor ovens or pits	Fabric blankets, play stoves, refrigerators etc.
Eating utensils	Sticks, bone utensils.	Plastic or play dinnerware
Hunting tools	Bows, arrows, spears, slingshots, traps, fishing poles	Plastic play guns, bow and arrows, fishing poles



NATIVE AMERICAN GAMES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Resources



Ball, W. W. R. (1971). Fun with string figures. New York, NY: Dover.

Baldwin, G. C. (1969). Games of the American Indian. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap.

Bernstein, B. & Blair, L. (1982). Native American crafts workshop. Belmont, CA: Pitman.

Blood, C.L. (1981). American Indian games and crafts. New York, NY: Watts.

Although out of print, the text of this book for young children is particularly lovely.

Culin, S. (1975). Games of the North American Indians. New York, NY: Dover.

This book is an unabridged replication of the Accompanying Paper, "Games of the North American Indians," of the *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institution, 1902 - 1903*, by W. H. Holmes, Chief, originally published by the Government Printing Office in 1907. Document no. 939 of the U.S. 59th Congress, 1st session, House of Representatives. It is an extremely interesting, scholarly work and is the reference for nearly all other books on the subject.

Gryski, C. (1983). Many stars & more string games. New York, NY: William Morrow.

This series of books provides clear directions and illustrations. Teachers will truly use and appreciate these as they learn string games. The accompanying cross-cultural stories are included.

Gryski, C. (1985). Super string games. New York, NY: William Morrow.

Gryski, C. (1987). Super string games. New York, NY: William Morrow.

Hofsinde, R. (1957). Indian games and crafts. New York, NY: Morrow.

Lavine, S. A. (1974). The games the Indians played. New York, NY: Dodd, Mead & Company.

The author emphasizes the spiritual and historical aspects of traditional Native American games.

Macfarlan, A. & Macfarlan, P. (1985). Handbook of American Indian games. New York, NY: Dover.

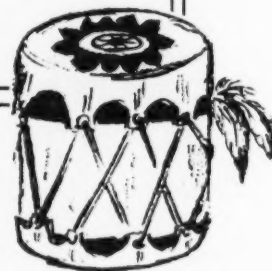
Absolutely a *must* for the classroom teacher. All you need to start playing traditional games!

Whitney, A. (1977). Sports & games the Indians gave us. New York, NY: David McKay.

Especially useful in this book, are the directions and patterns for making game equipment and the diagrams of game boards, layouts etc.

UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN GAMES

- The traditional games of North American Indians may be classified in a small number of related groups.
- The form and structure of these traditional games are practically identical and universal among all the tribes. The geography and resources of a particular region determined the kind of equipment used in the games, and, in some instances, the kind of games played.
- Traditional games were either parts of rites or descended from ceremonial observances of a religious character.
- These games are rooted in a common myth or myths with which they are associated.
- While the object of many games may appear to be amusement or gain, they were performed also as religious ceremonies, as rites pleasing to the gods to secure their favor, or as means to drive away sickness, avert other evil, or produce rain and the fertilization and reproduction of plants and animals, or other beneficial results.
- They agree in general and in particular with certain widespread ceremonial observances found on other continents. These observances, seek to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge.



Adapted from: Culin, S. (1975). Games of the North American Indians. New York, NY: Dover. (Original work published in 1907)

REFERENCES

McClard, M. & Ypsilantis, G. (1989). Hiawatha and the Iroquois League. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Silver Burdett Press.

Ehle, J. (1988). Trail of Tears: The rise and fall of the Cherokee Nation. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Students revive ancient Choctaw game. (1990, Early September). News From Indian Country, p. 29.

